



Photograph of Graffiti, in Chutisa Bowman, "Creativity is Immensely Important in Our Everyday Life," April 24, 2021, <http://chutisabowman.com/blog/why-is-creativity-important-in-everyday-life>

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
Winter 2022**

**ENG 230: Creativity, Writing, and Everyday Life**

**Instructor: Dr. Irene Gammel**

**Office: 1802 – 415 Yonge Street**

**Office Hours: Th 1:00 -2:00 PM EST (Virtual and by Appointment)**

**Email: [gammel@ryerson.ca](mailto:gammel@ryerson.ca)**

**Website: [mlc.ryerson.ca](http://mlc.ryerson.ca) | Twitter: @MLC\_Research**

This is a Professional elective available to English majors (BA English and Double Majors) and ACS English Option students. It is also available as a Professionally Related or Open Elective course to certain programs (please check your program's elective tables to ensure you can take this course for credit). This is NOT a Liberal Studies credit.

The Faculty Course Survey will be administered between: March 19 to 29, 2021.  
There is no Final Exam in this course.

**Lecture/seminar schedule**

**Thursday 12:00 Noon – 3:00 PM**      **Zoom <https://ryerson.zoom.us/j/91657872222>**

In-person location: RCC 201

NB: Students **must** attend their RAMSS-assigned lectures (and seminars/tutorials).

**Special Notice Winter 2022:** Students are responsible for checking D2L frequently, keeping up with assigned readings and lecture notes, and submitting assignments on designated dates.

Contingencies: If the university switches to emergency remote learning, or if the instructor is directed to self-isolate, learning will switch entirely to Zoom-mediated learning. If students are directed to isolate, they will be exempt from in-person activities but still need to supply all assignments on the day thereof.

We recognize that various situations may arise during the term that impact students' learning. Students are encouraged to keep in regular contact with their instructors about their individual situations throughout the term.

**Students are expected to regularly refer to the Ryerson COVID-19 <https://www.ryerson.ca/covid-19/> page for updates on the University's response to COVID-19 and how it impacts their studies.**

**Academic Integrity:** Course material, including original materials posted on D2L or delivered through video conferencing, are subject to copyright legislation as well as Ryerson's [Senate Policy 60 - Academic Integrity](#). Any attempt to share course materials with third parties outside of the course may be subject to disciplinary measures.

### **Calendar Description**

Creativity as a distinct practice of expression and investigation is a key function of art and learning. Students analyze the role of creativity in the making and criticism of literary objects, including poetry, short stories, novels, and more. Accounting for historical models of literary invention and other associated terms (such as genius and taste), students examine the role of creativity and its value in writing, scholarship, and the everyday circumstances of our lives.

### **Detailed Description**

"Creativity is a characteristic given to all human beings at birth," Abraham Maslow wrote, while Sigmund Freud asserted that creativity was rooted in childhood play and pleasure. Through the lens of a variety of writers and thinkers, students will engage with questions regarding the role of creativity in everyday life. Students will examine a broad range of writings about everyday life, including sports writing, writing about food and family, illness and trauma and healing. They will look at the relationship between writing and the visual arts including documentary arts and comics. Students will be able to learn directly from and engage with leading creative writers and practitioners like Indian-American writer Amitava Kumar, President Obama's favourite novelist; American-Canadian artists' biographer Molly Peacock, *Globe and Mail* sports columnist Cathal Kelly, British poet and writer Clare Best, and journalist and author Jan Wong. Through a field trip to the AGO, students will be able to appreciate the role of creativity in decolonizing and rewriting the old colonial stories and power structures. Ultimately, students will be able to bring their

own voice to bear on an important international conversation about creativity, writing, and the everyday life.

### **Delivery Mode**

**3-hour seminar with lecture, discussions, reflections, workshops, and field trip.**

### **Course Goal**

In this course students examine a range of texts in relation to theories and practices of creativity to learn, appreciate and deepen humanistic skills in creative (and critical) reading, writing, making, reflecting, as well as discussion and research.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- **Outcome 1.** Students develop an understanding of creativity while honing their own creativity through the study of text, field trip(s), guest lectures by leading professionals, and by reflecting and doing.
- **Outcome 2.** Students describe and discuss how texts produce important cultural meanings and actions; they consider how age, class, gender, ethnicity, and race shape creativity, and how creativity in turn can transform these categories.
- **Outcome 3.** Students participate in discussions and raise critical questions about the creative process and the role of writing and drawing in diverse forms of writing and creative activity.
- **Outcome 4.** Students interact with and critically engage with leading literary, journalistic, biographical, and curatorial creators locally and internationally and learn about the importance of networking within the creative fields.
- **Outcome 5.** Students demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the readings, critical thinking skills, advanced writing skills, and use of MLA style.

### **Required Texts**

Required texts are available at the RU Bookstore.

Kelly, Cathal. *Boy Wonders: A Memoir of Childhood*. Toronto: Penguin, 2018.

Kumar, Amitava. *Every Day I Write the Book: Notes on Style*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020.

Wong, Jan. *Apron Strings: Navigating Food and Family in France, Italy, and China*. Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 2017.

*The following additional required chapters and articles are available via D2L and the University library.*

Best, Clare. *The Missing List*. Linen Press, 2018. Pp. 1-21.

Best, Clare. "Listing the Unthinkable." *a/b: Autobiography Studies* (2020): 1-4.  
[file:///C:/Users/Irene/Downloads/ListingtheUnthinkable.CB%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Irene/Downloads/ListingtheUnthinkable.CB%20(1).pdf)

Kranias, Kathy. "Making, Material and Orientation: My Process in Clay." *Studio: Craft and Design in Canada*, Fall/Winter, vol. 13, no. 2, 2018, pp. 30-33.  
<https://www.kathykranias.com/writing>

Kranias, Kathy. "A Passionate Career." In *A Thousand Colours - Sarah Hall Glass*, Friesens, 2017, pp. 282-289. <https://www.kathykranias.com/writing>

Molly Peacock. *Flower Diary: In Which Mary Hiester Reid Paints, Travels, Marries, and Opens a Door*. Toronto: ECW Press, 2021. [pages 162-215].

Worden, Daniel. *Neoliberal Non-Fictions: The Documentary Aesthetic from Joan Didion to Jay-Z*. University of Virginia Press, 2020. [Introduction, 1-20; Chapter 5: Speculative Ecology, 105-126]

**D2L Brightspace**

Students are expected to consult the course pages on my.ryerson.ca (D2L Brightspace) for scheduling changes, relevant assigned readings and assignments pertaining to the lecture on a weekly basis.

**Assessment**

Assignment	Due Date	Value
Weekly posting of TWO thoughtful questions based on your weekly readings to be submitted on D2L three days before each guest lecture	Due each Monday by 12:00 noon	10%
Book Review 1,000 words	By March 24	30%
Creativity Diary 3,000 words consisting of ongoing weekly individualized/critical responses on how each reading has affected your understanding of creativity and everyday life; entries to be selected, revised, and submitted in polished form on the last day of class	By April 14	40%
Participation (in-class + online responses)	Ongoing	20%

**Please note:** Students are encouraged to organize their schedules to submit their assignments **on or before** the due dates. There are no extensions except for extraordinary circumstances or as set out through Academic Accommodations.

## Description of Assignments/Assessments

### **1. Weekly Questions | Due date: each Monday by 12:00 noon**

***Consists of: TWO (2) thoughtful questions per week engaging the weekly reading for the upcoming guest lecture to be posted on D2L.***

Students will read materials ahead of time, and post TWO (2) thoughtful questions per week for the respective guest speaker on D2L. Students may or may not be called up during the Q & A following the guest lecture to pose their questions in class. Good questions typically reveal a thoughtful reflection on the problematic presented by an author, while also filtering the question through a new consciousness, giving a problematic a slightly new angle. You can also start with a brief evocative quotation from an author's assigned writings and pose the question. *Your focus should be on bringing out particularly interesting facets of the text that are not obvious at first reading.* The expectation is that you dive into your week's reading(s) and develop an angle for talking about them critically/theoretically – in other words, an argument is necessary. You are free to use additional theories and works in addition to the week's readings but must centrally address the week's readings.

*The 2 questions are due on the respective Monday by noon before a Thursday guest lecture.* Late questions will be accepted until the day before the guest lecture but penalized as per the course policies. Questions will not be accepted on the day of the guest lecture or after.

### **2. Book Review | Due date: March 24, 2021**

***Consists of: 1,000-word book review in MLA format***

This assignment involves a deep-dive book review into ONE of the following two required books on the syllabus, Cathal Kelly's *Boy Wonders*, or Jan Wong's *Apron Strings*. Whichever book you choose, you must read the entire book to write your book review; the review cannot be on just excerpts. A book review should be written in essay style, reveal deep reflection, and consist of the following parts:

- (a) A title and strong opening
- (b) A survey or summary of the book's content
- (c) An analysis of the book and its ideas, objectives, themes, and writing style
- (d) An assessment whereby you can also place a book in the context of other comparative books (are there other books that are similar? What is the book's significance?)
- (e) A recommendation as to which readers might benefit most from a particular book (optional)
- (f) A Works Cited



- (g) Which journal are you targeting as a potential outlet for publication? Add a sentence at the end indicating the ideal publication outlet for your review. Eg. *The Literary Review of Canada*

Avoiding pitfalls:

- To avoid getting lost in detail, identify the book's thesis and highlight it in the beginning.
- Instead of focussing on negatives, focus on the positives. What is the book trying to do? How does it achieve its goals? Assess the book by its own objectives.
- Avoid lengthy quotations; keep quotations short and snappy.

An online example of a book review can be found here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/23/books/review/san-fransicko-michael-shellenberger.html>

Helpful guides for a book review can be found here:

[https://www.une.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/11132/WE\\_Writing-an-annotated-bibliography.pdf](https://www.une.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/11132/WE_Writing-an-annotated-bibliography.pdf)

<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/book-review.pdf>

**3. Diary Portfolio | Due date: final week of class and no later than April 14, 2022**  
**Consists of: 15-page essay, plus Works Cited list submitted via D2L.**

The Diary Portfolio is based on students' weekly journal writing and must reflect critically on what they have read and learned about the readings on the course syllabus; this diary should also include what skills or insights they have acquired through field trip and their reflections on creativity via the readings and lectures. Students are encouraged to include visual examples of the drawings made during the drawing workshop. The Diary Portfolio **cannot exceed 3,000 words** and must be submitted in **digital format** (double-spaced. This diary portfolio constitutes **40%** of your evaluation. Due date: Final week and no later than April 14, 2022.

**4. Participation | Due date: Ongoing**

**Consists of: in-class attendance, discussion, and weekly written reflections**

Participation and engagement of in-class discussion and reflection are important to this course, as are attendance and preparedness. This component includes in-class weekly written and oral reflections on readings, as well as workshopping relevant documents and practices.

This class does not operate on a drop-in basis, so please do not arrive late, or leave early, and do not schedule outside appointments during class time.

**Course Schedule**

\*Asterisk signifies optional readings

Week	Date	Topic	Reading -
1	Th, Jan 20	<b>Introduction to Course</b>	Overview of Syllabus
2	Th, Jan 27	<b>Becoming a Writer: Self-Help and Credos</b>  <i>Guest: Amitava Kumar, author of Every Day I Write the Book</i>	Kumar, <i>Every Day I Write the Book</i> , Part i-v
3	Th, Feb 3	<b>Performing a Narrative: Social Justice</b>  <i>Guests: Sonya Fatah on "Live Journalism" and Lauren Kirchner on community based arts-initiatives</i>	Kumar, <i>Every Day I Write the Book</i> , Part vi-ix
4	Th, Feb 10	<b>Creativity, Writing, Visual Art</b>  <i>Guest: Molly Peacock, poet &amp; biographer</i>	Molly Peacock, <i>Flower Diary</i> , pp. 162-211
5	Th, Feb 17	<b>Creativity, Drawing, Affective Objects</b>  <i>Guest: Ingrid Mida</i>  <i>Workshop: Students bring a favorite object to class, as well as pencil and paper</i>	Ingrid Mida, "The Curator's Sketchbook"; and "Objects and Things"
6	Th, Feb 24	<b>Reading Week No Classes</b>	
7	Th, Mar 3	<b>Becoming a Sports Journalist</b>  <i>Guest: Cathal Kelly, Globe and Mail sports columnist</i>	Cathal Kelly, <i>Boy Wonders: A Memoir of Childhood</i> - "Introduction," "Star Wars," "Hockey," "The Michael Jackson Jacket," "Hair," "The Subway," "Dungeons & Dragons," and "Orwell"

8	Th, Mar 10	<p><b>Curating Creativity</b> <u>Field Trip to AGO</u> engaging an exhibition</p> <p>Decolonizing Creativity: Robert Houle, <i>Red is Beautiful</i> Visuality and Mental Health: Matthew Wang, <i>Blue</i></p> <p><i>Guest (TBC): Georgiana Uhlyarik: The Interface of Curator and Viewer</i></p>	<p>Shirley Madill, <i>Robert Houle: Life and Work</i> <a href="https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/robert-houle/">https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/robert-houle/</a> 1-62.</p>
9	Th, Mar 17	<p><b>Food, Family, Creativity</b></p> <p><i>Guest: Jan Wong, journalist and author of Apron Strings</i></p>	<p>Jan Wong, <i>Apron Strings</i>, Part iii: China</p>
10	Th, Mar 24	<p><b>Illness, Trauma, and Creativity</b></p> <p><i>Guest: Clare Best, author of The Missing List</i></p> <p><b>*DUE*: Book Review</b></p>	<p>Clare Best, <i>The Missing List</i>, "Foreword," "Author's Notes," "[First Chapter]"; Clare Best, "Listing the Unthinkable"</p>
11	Thu, Mar 31	<p><b>Documentary Aesthetics and Climate Change</b></p> <p><i>Guests: Daniel Worden on Speculative Ecology and Ravi Jain on What We Don't Do for Love</i></p>	<p>Daniel Worden, <i>Neoliberal Non-Fictions</i>, Introduction &amp; Chapter 5: Speculative Ecology</p> <p><i>What We Don't Do for Love</i>, film starring David Suzuki, link available 2 weeks prior to Guest Lecture</p>
12	Th, April 7	<p><u>Workshopping Diary Entries</u></p> <p>~</p> <p><b>Creative Resilience and the #MeToo Movement</b></p> <p><i>Guest: Kathy Kranias, Ceramics and Glass Artist focussing on #MeToo Art</i></p>	<p>Come prepared with 2-3 of your diary entries to workshop</p> <p>Kathy Kranias, "Making, Material and Orientation: My Process in Clay" and "A Passionate Career" <a href="https://www.kathykranias.com/writing">https://www.kathykranias.com/writing</a></p>
13	Th, April 14	<p><b>*DUE*: Final Diary Assignment</b></p>	



### **University Policies**

Students are reminded that they are required to adhere to all relevant university policies found in their online course shell in D2L and/or on the following URL: <http://ryerson.ca/senate/course-outline-policies>

### **English Department Policies**

**Special Notice for Winter 2022:** *Some of these policies may be modified in response to COVID-19 developments.*

### **Attendance and Participation:**

Seminars and in-class activities provide the foundation for all coursework. Regular attendance is expected of all students.

A core objective of the BA Honours English degree and English courses is to develop a sophisticated ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses in oral format. Participation marks measure students' ability to articulate well-reasoned and well-supported analysis of reading materials and respond meaningfully and considerately to the ideas of their classmates. Students cannot earn participation marks for classes from which they are absent.

### **Use of Technology in Classroom:**

The misuse of technology, which includes texting, web browsing, online gaming, video and movie watching, will not be permitted in any English Department courses. If approved by individual instructors, electronic devices may be used during lectures or seminars (tutorials) strictly for course-related purposes — note-taking, online reading, and assignments/exercises. Refusal to comply with this policy may result in the loss of electronic privileges for the term and the dismissal of a student from a lecture. Mobile phones and tablets must be fully turned off for the duration of each class.

### **Late Policy:**

The penalty for late submission in the Department of English is 5% per day up to a maximum of seven days. Assignments submitted more than seven days after the due date will not be reviewed and will receive a grade of zero, unless there is a documented medical reason or an extension has been granted on the basis of documented compassionate grounds. Academic consideration for late or missed assignments must be requested as outlined in the Senate Academic Consideration Policy:

<https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol167.pdf>

### **Other Course/Instructor Policies**

### **Student Writing Resources**

Writing Support <http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/writing-support/index.html>

**Other Student Resources**

Academic Integrity <http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/>

Academic Accommodation Support

<http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support>

Personal counselling (free + confidential) <http://www.ryerson.ca/counselling/index.html>

Financial Assistance <https://www.ryerson.ca/sfa/>

Learning Support <http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/index.html>

Medical Centre <http://www.ryerson.ca/healthandwellness/medicalcentre/>

Ryerson Student Union <http://www.rsuonline.ca/index.php>

Student Affairs <http://www.ryerson.ca/studentaffairs//index.html>

Writing Support <http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/writing-support/index.html>

Ryerson Library RULA <https://library.ryerson.ca/>

Ryerson calendar and student guide <https://www.ryerson.ca/calendar/>